



Department of Commerce Occupational Safety and Health Report

April 2004

Occupational Safety and Health Report

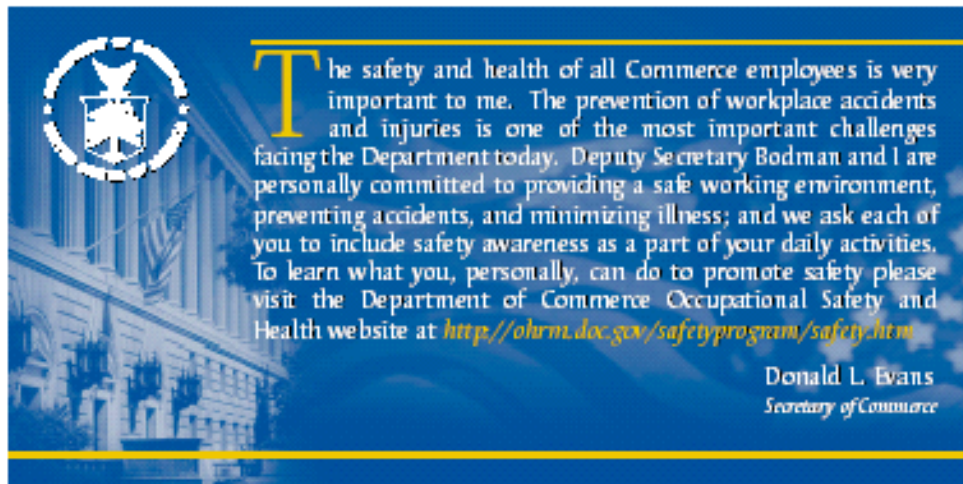
April 2004

Introduction

This report provides an update to Department of Commerce (DOC) managers and employees on the progress of Departmental safety and occupational health initiatives and information regarding important Department-wide safety and occupational health issues for March 2004. The report also contains the latest available accident data for the Department. Section One of the report, Program Updates, provides updates on the safety and occupational health initiatives. Section Two, Injury Statistics, provides statistics regarding Department injuries, as reported to the Workers' Compensation Program for March 2004, and an analysis of the data to assist bureaus in focusing their safety efforts. Section Three, Survey Results, provides the April results from the on-line survey available through the intranet Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Program Web Site.

Section One: Program Updates

During pay period 4, March 18, 2004, an insert promoting the Commerce Department's Occupational Safety and Health program was enclosed with the Statement of Earnings and Leave (SEL) to all Commerce employees (see below).



On March 5, 2004, in accordance with Public Law 91-596, the *Occupational Safety and Health Act* (OSH Act) of 1970, Section 19(a)(5), the Chief Financial Officer, Assistant Secretary for Administration, (CFO/ASA), Mr. Otto Wolff, forwarded the Department of Commerce's (DOC) *Agency Fiscal Year 2003 Annual Report on Occupational Safety and Health* to the Department

of Labor. The Department's *Fiscal Year 2003 Annual Report on Occupational Safety and Health* reflects a positive story for the Department with continuous improvements over the past year where; DOC's injury and illness claims have declined 9.2 percent, workers' compensation costs were reduced \$656,551, and the workers' compensation continuation of pay costs have declined significantly. Additionally, it highlighted Department-wide programs for providing safe and healthful conditions of employment during FY 2003, and Departmental Occupational Safety and Health goals for FY 2004. The Department's *Agency Fiscal Year 2003 Annual Report on Occupational Safety and Health and Executive Summary* is on the DOC Occupational Safety and Health Web Site at: <http://ohrm.doc.gov/DOLExecSummary.pdf> and <http://ohrm.doc.gov/AnnualReport.pdf>.

To adequately address the Department's long-term workers' compensation claims and assist in the reduction of workers' compensation costs the Office of Safety and Occupational Health (OOSH) obligated \$49K to modify the current workers' compensation contract to permit the movement of 76 of 429 long-term workers' compensation cases to the existing Contract Claims Services Inc. contract. This action will ensure full time focus on these long-term workers' compensation cases to return employees to work with a projected full cost recovery of \$337,807.

The Department's Occupational Safety and Health Corporate Board met March 19, 2004. Issues addressed included the execution of the DOC's Safety, Health and Return-to-Employment (SHARE) goals, modification of the DOC monthly report, DOC travel health policy development, training, and accident and injury reporting.

Section Two: Injury Statistics

This section provides information on the total number of Departmental injuries for the past 5 years and analyzes the types of injuries across the Department. The information in Chart 2 reflects statistics through March 2004. Due to late submissions, processing limitations and to ensure the accuracy of the information, this section will continue to include information up to the previous month. The data presented in the charts and tables are based upon Departmental Workers' Compensation Program records.

Incidence Rate: The incidence rate (IR) represents the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and is calculated as follows:

$$IR = \frac{N}{EH}(200,000)$$

N	=	Number of injuries and illnesses
EH	=	Total hours worked by all employees during the year ¹
200,000	=	Base for 100 equivalent full-time workers (40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year)

The Commerce Workers' Compensation Program keeps records of all injury and illness claims, including those that did not include any lost work time. An accounting of all incidents allows follow-up and more comprehensive program review by safety representatives. However, the incident rates from those records are not directly comparable, since they include many minor injuries and illnesses that are not considered "work-related" under Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards for private industry. Injury rates may be skewed as safety awareness increases and employees are encouraged to report all injuries, causing total injury rates to increase despite improvements to safety. Using standardized OSHA recordable incident reporting helps to reduce inconsistent reporting. An OSHA recordable incident is a work-related injury or illness that resulted in one or more of the following: medical treatment beyond first aid, a significant injury or illness diagnosed by a physician or other licensed health care professional, days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, loss of consciousness, or death.

Table 1A provides data that corresponds to the OSHA recordable injury criteria. The remaining tables and charts include data for all cases submitted to the Workers' Compensation Program.

¹ The total hours worked were determined based on the total number of employees and the average hours.

Chart 1

Historical Total Case Incidence Rate Trend (TCIR)

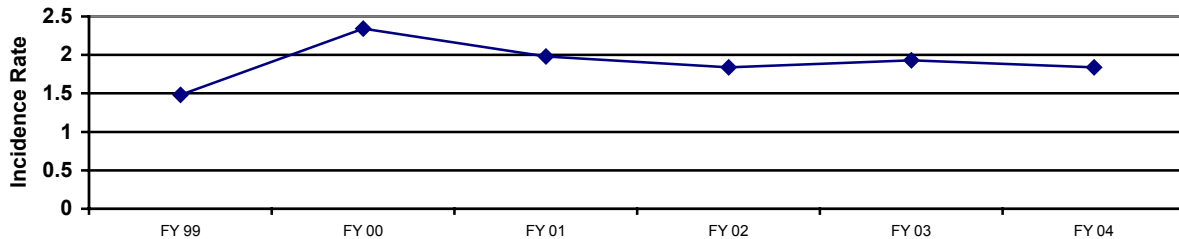
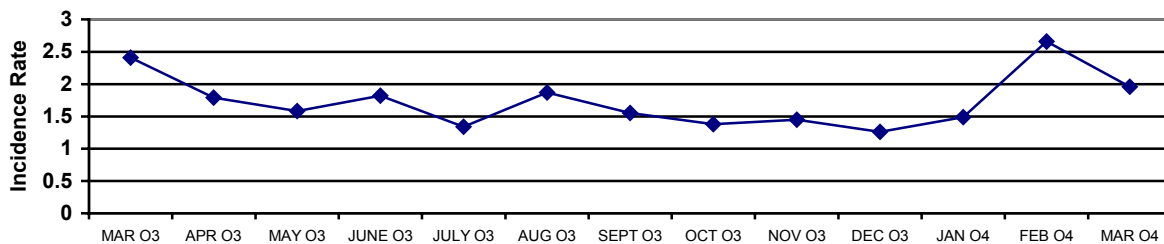


Chart 2

Monthly Case Incidence Rate Trend (TCIR)

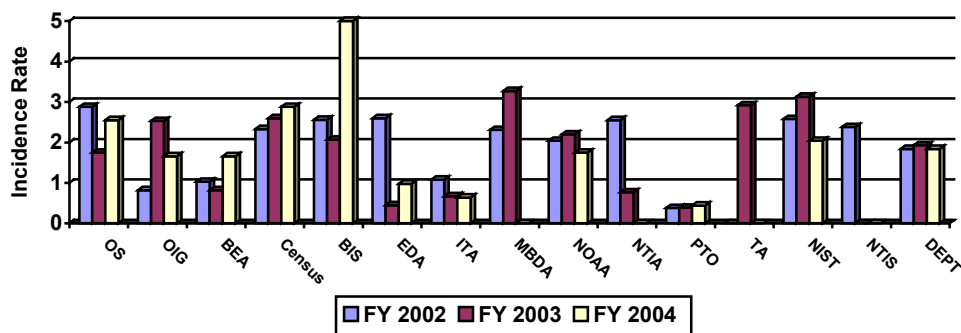


Major Findings include:

- **The FY 2004 Total Case Incidence Rate (TCIR) to date for Commerce is down from the rate for FY 2003 and the same as FY 2002.** The TCIR is 1.84 (see Chart 1) for FY 2004, 1.93 for FY 2003, and 1.84 for FY 2002. A total of 310 total injuries were reported thus far for FY 2004 (see Table 1).
- **Of the larger bureaus (with more than 500 employees) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) had lower TCIRs to date for FY 2004 when compared to FY 2003 (see Chart 3).**
- **Of the smaller bureaus (i.e., bureaus with less than 500 employees), only 15 injuries were reported to date in FY 2004.**
- **The Total Recordable Case Incidence Rate (TRCIR) for Commerce is down from previous years.** The TRCIRs for Commerce are 1.44 for FY 2004, 1.48 for FY 2003 and 1.60 for FY 2002 (see Table 1A).

Chart 3

Total Case Incidence Rate Comparison (TCIR)



Types of Injuries: Many of the injuries reported can be prevented through improved safety awareness and proper maintenance. A Departmental and bureau focus on eliminating injuries and illnesses continues to be essential. Evaluating the types of claims submitted and structuring safety awareness training programs to eliminate accidents can assist in the mitigation of injuries and illnesses. Information on types of injuries is provided in Charts 4 and 5 and Tables 2 and 2A.

- **“Slips/Falls” injuries accounted for 31 percent of all injuries in FY 2003 (see Chart 4). The trend is lower when compared to 30 percent of injuries reported to date in FY 2004 (see Chart 5).** Many of the slips and falls reported in FY 2004 were attributed to slips and falls from ice on sidewalks and parking lots and melted ice in the entrances and hallways. Also equipment left on walking surfaces caused several trips and falls. Employees should use caution and be attentive to the condition of walking surfaces.
- **“Struck By” injuries accounted for 22 percent of those reported in FY 2003 (see Chart 4). To date, FY 2004 “struck by” injuries have increased to 27 percent (see Chart 5).** Most of the struck by injuries were caused by objects in the workplace not being used or stored correctly and drawer and file cabinets left open. Employees should close drawers and file cabinets when not in use.

- **“Exertion” injuries accounted for 25 percent of all injuries in the Department for FY 2003.** During FY 2004 “exertion” injuries accounted for only 22 percent of all annual injuries to date demonstrating a reversing trend. To continue this trend OOSH request that employees use a cart to move heavy objects and/or seek the assistance of Departmental movers.

Chart 4
Injury Type As Percentage of Total Injuries for FY 2003

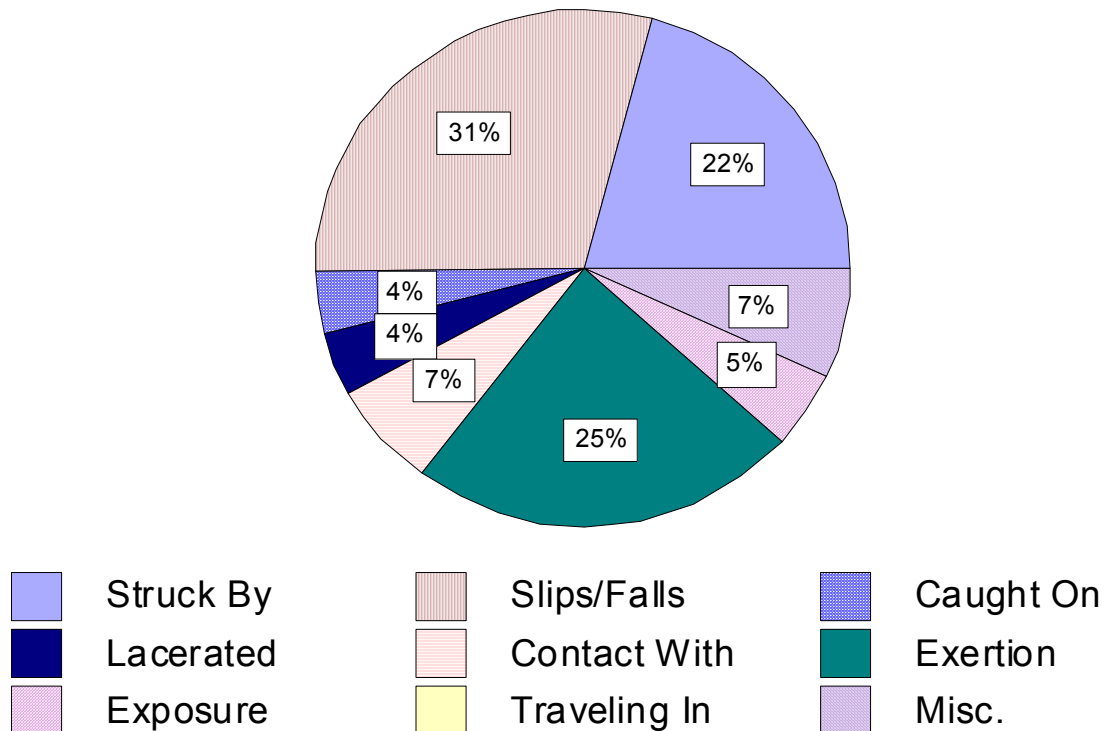


Chart 5
Injury Type As Percentage of Total Injuries “to date” for FY 2004

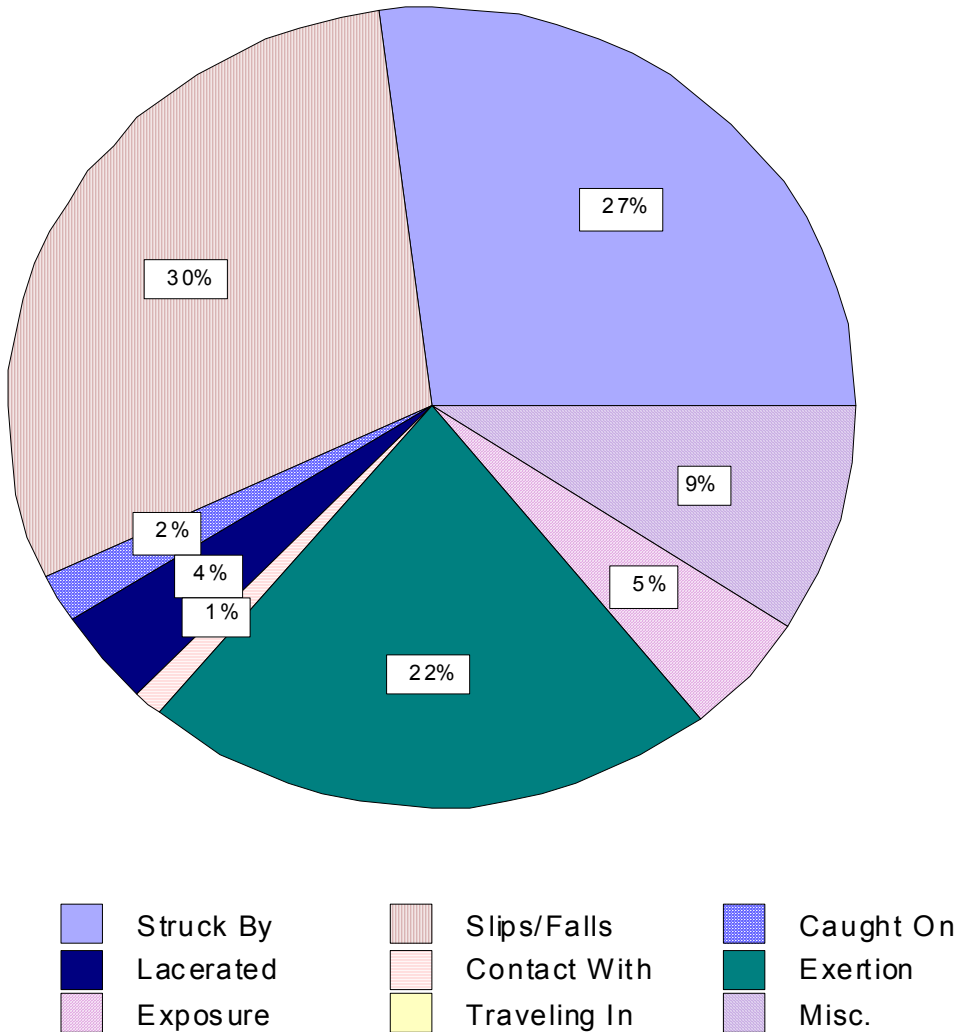


TABLE 1
TOTAL CASE INCIDENCE RATE* (TCIR)

Bureau	FY1999		FY2000		FY2001		FY2002		FY2003		February 2004		March 2004		FY 2004 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Office of the Secretary	19	2.20*	35	3.94	22	2.47	23	2.88	14	1.75	5	7.71	1	1.53	10	2.55
Office of Inspector General	2	1.32	4	2.98	3	2.15	1	0.82	3	2.53	0	0	0	0	1	1.66
Bureau of Economic Analysis	4	0.88	1	0.23	5	1.12	4	1.03	4	0.82	2	4.95	0	0	4	1.66
Bureau of the Census	311	1.04	383	2.83	393	2.41	241	2.33	252	2.60	30	3.67	27	3.31	141	2.88
Bureau of Industry and Security	11	3.08	15	4.06	9	2.44	9	2.56	7	2.07	2	7.04	2	7.05	9	5.29
Economic Development Administration	9	3.67	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	1	0.45	1	5.90	0	0	1	0.98
International Trade Administration	18	0.92	24	1.23	12	0.62	18	1.08	11	0.67	3	2.21	0	0	5	0.64
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.10	3	3.40	4	4.36	2	2.31	3	3.27	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	317	2.78	307	2.69	247	2.18	228	2.04	246	2.20	23	2.48	18	1.94	97	1.75
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	2	0.88	2	0.87	7	3.03	6	2.55	2	0.77	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patent and Trademark Office	27	0.47	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	24	0.39	0	0	4	0.80	13	0.44
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.92	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Institute of Standards and Technology	84	2.87	79	2.82	68	2.34	76	2.58	90	3.13	9	3.80	3	1.27	29	2.04
National Technical Information Service	6	2.61	4	2.15	1	0.52	4	2.38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	811	1.48	890	2.34	807	1.98	642	1.84	658	1.93	75	2.66	55	1.96	310	1.84
Decennial Census 2000	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3										

* Total Case Incidence Rate includes all cases reported to the Workers' Compensation Program.

** Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Case Incidence Rate.

TABLE 1A
TOTAL RECORDABLE CASE INCIDENCE RATE* (TRCIR)

Bureau	FY1999		FY 2000		FY2001		FY 2002		FY2003		February 2004		March 2004		FY 2004 (To Date)	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
Office of the Secretary	19	2.20*	30	3.38	17	1.91	22	2.75	12	1.50	4	6.17	1	1.53	9	2.30
Office of Inspector General	1	0.66	3	2.24	3	2.15	1	0.82	3	2.53	0	0	0	0	1	1.66
Bureau of Economic Analysis	4	0.88	0	0	5	1.12	3	0.77	3	0.62	2	4.95	0	0	4	1.66
Bureau of the Census	288	0.96	345	2.55	332	2.04	212	2.05	184	1.90	26	3.18	22	2.70	110	2.25
Bureau of Industry and Security	10	2.80	13	3.52	8	2.17	9	2.56	7	2.07	1	3.52	2	7.05	7	4.12
Economic Development Administration	8	3.26	4	1.69	5	2.08	6	2.60	0	0	1	5.90	0	0	1	0.98
International Trade Administration	17	0.86	22	1.13	11	0.57	10	0.60	11	0.67	3	2.21	0	0	4	0.51
Minority Business Development Agency	1	1.10	2	2.27	4	4.36	2	2.31	2	2.18	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	275	2.41	289	2.53	225	1.98	203	1.81	196	1.75	18	1.94	12	1.30	76	1.37
National Telecommunications & Information Administration	2	0.88	2	0.87	5	2.16	3	1.27	2	0.77	0	0	0	0	0	0
Patent and Trademark Office	26	0.45	29	0.50	31	0.55	24	0.38	24	0.39	0	0	4	0.80	13	0.44
Technology Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.92	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Institute of Standards and Technology	76	2.60	66	2.36	55	1.89	59	2.00	58	2.01	6	2.53	1	0.42	18	1.27
National Technical Information Service	5	2.18	4	2.15	1	0.52	3	1.78	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	732	1.34	809	2.13	702	1.72	557	1.60	503	1.48	61	2.16	42	1.49	243	1.44
Decennial Census 2000	890	11.3	4798	6.7	32	13.3										

* The Total Recordable Case Incidence Rate includes only those injuries or illnesses that are reportable to OSHA under 29 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1904.

** Population fluctuations can have a serious positive or negative impact on the Total Reported Case Incidence Rate.

Table 2

**INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU
AGENCIES WITH MORE THAN 500 EMPLOYEES
(Through March 2004)**

BUREAU	NOAA			CENSUS			NIST			PTO			ITA			OS			TOTAL
Fiscal Year	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	
Struck By/Against An Object	29	55	30	27	45	37	8	26	11	4	5	2	1	3	0	2	3	0	288
Falls/Slips	59	59	20	96	96	47	22	21	8	7	12	5	7	6	3	2	2	5	477
Caught On An Object	5	12	2	8	3	0	2	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	44
Cuts/Bites	26	5	2	19	19	10	9	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	97
Contact With An Object	19	5	0	11	5	3	6	0	0	6	4	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	62
Exertion/ Motion	64	73	26	37	51	25	17	22	5	2	2	4	2	0	1	1	8	2	342
Exposure To Chemicals/ Elements	9	9	2	6	18	11	3	3	1	1	0	0	6	1	0	12	0	1	83
Traveling In Car/Metro/ Taxi	10	0	0	16	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27
Miscellaneous*	7	22	15	21	10	8	8	8	3	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	109
TOTAL	228	240	97	241	247	141	76	88	29	24	24	13	18	11	5	23	14	10	1529

* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

** Decennial Census claims were omitted to provide a clearer picture of injury trends

Table 2A

**INJURY TYPES BY BUREAU
AGENCIES WITH LESS THAN 500 EMPLOYEES
(Through March 2004)**

BUREAU	OIG			ESA/BEA			EDA			TA			NTIS			NTIA			MBDA			BIS			Total
Fiscal Year	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	02	03	04	
Struck By/Against An Object	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	13
Falls/Slips	0	1	0	2	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	3	21
Caught On An Object	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
Cuts/Bites	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contact with an Object	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	5
Exertion/ Motion	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	16
Exposure To Chemicals/ Elements	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Traveling In Car/Metro/ Taxi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Miscellaneous*	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	8
Total	1	3	1	4	4	4	6	1	1	0	1	0	4	0	0	6	2	0	2	3	0	9	7	9	68

* Miscellaneous includes injuries not covered in the standard OSHA types of injuries. These include twisting/bending injuries, emotional/psychological stress injuries, injuries which exacerbate a preexisting condition resulting in conditions such as heart attack, seizures, and stroke.

Section Three: Survey Results

We continue to receive comments through the Safety and Health Survey website. We are using employee comments to help shape a safety program responsive to employee issues and concerns. The website can be accessed through the OHRM homepage at <http://ohrm.doc.gov/>.

Safety Survey Statistics

We received 83 responses to April's survey. The following tables provide data regarding the distribution of responses by bureau and general geographical area, as well as general safety impressions. The occupational safety and health survey provides feedback from the DOC community we serve and provides an additional insight on whether or not Departmental occupational safety and health programs and initiatives are active.

Table 3a
Safety and Health Survey
April Results

Have you experienced a safety lapse in your work area during the past 3 months?		
Answer	Response	Percent
No	64	78.05%
Yes	18	21.95%

Table 3b
Safety Survey
April Results

Have you noticed any safety improvements in your work area or in the Department as a whole during the past 3 months?		
Answer	Response	Percent
No	46	56.79%
Yes	35	43.21%

Table 3b indicates the continued perception that there is a lack of safety improvements within the Department. Where over 79.52% of the responses are associated with the Department's three major bureaus NOAA, CENSUS, and NIST respectively (see Table 3d).

In response to the perception that there is a lack of safety and health improvements within the Department, the Occupational Safety and Health Council organized an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) survey-working group to develop a method to respond and track issues

related to the safety and health survey.

In April 2004, the OSH survey-working group (NOAA, Census, PTO and ITA) provided a draft copy of the revised OSH survey to OHRM's information technology (IT) office. The OHRM IT office will begin the development of the new OSH survey. A follow-on meeting with the working group is currently being scheduled to ensure all requirements are identified and to provide additional information to support required data fields. The group will be requesting information and input from each bureau and/agency to finalize the survey.

Table 3c
Safety Survey
April Results by Geographic Area

Geographical Location		
State	Response	Percent
AK	1	1.20%
CA	1	1.20%
CO	2	2.41%
DC	10	12.05%
FL	1	1.20%
GA	1	1.20%
ID	2	2.41%
IN	3	3.61%
KS	2	2.41%
MD	37	44.58%
MI	1	1.20%
MO	1	1.20%
NC	1	1.20%
NE	1	1.20%
OR	1	1.20%
SC	1	1.20%
TX	1	1.20%
UT	1	1.20%
VA	10	12.05%
WA	5	6.02%

Table 3d
Safety Survey
April Results by Bureau/Agency

Bureau Breakdown		
Bureau	Response	Percent
BEA	1	1.20%
BIS	3	3.61%
CENSUS	24	28.92%
ITA	3	3.61%
NIST	10	12.05%
NOAA	32	38.55%
NTIA	1	1.20%
OS	1	1.20%
PTO	8	9.64%